



Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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IOWA STATE PARK CAMPGROUNDS REMAIN OPEN ALL YEAR

DES MOINES - Iowa Department of Natural Resources staff will begin preparing certain facilities in state parks for winter after the October 15 weekend, which includes shutting off water to shower buildings and flush toilets. But campgrounds, electricity and frost-free hydrants used to fill water jugs will remain open all year.

“In my mind, now is the best time of year to use a park – fewer bugs, it’s less crowded, and cool nights to sit around a campfire,” said Jim Lawson, supervisor for state parks in south central Iowa. He said it is also an excellent time for leaf viewing. “Get out and enjoy the colors now, because they are going to go quick.”

In addition to view the fall foliage, park users can look forward to good fishing and enjoy the park trails. “In the fall, we would encourage all trail users to wear blaze orange apparel,” said Greg Van Fosson, supervisor for parks in north-central Iowa.

Some parks are currently participating in bow deer hunting, including George Wyth, Pine Lake, Elk Rock, Lake Keomah, Lake Macbride, Bellevue, Maquoketa Caves, Pikes Peak, Palisades-Kepler and Walnut Woods. Other parks will have deer hunts later in the fall.

Some parks staff will keep an eye on the weather and winterize their park toward the end of October. Someone planning to go camping should call the park to see if water is still available. Camping rates for most parks decline after Labor Day weekend, then decline again once water is turned off. For electric sites, campers would pay \$11. Non-electric site campers would pay \$6.

Seasonal businesses near state parks are beginning to close for the year, so it would be a good idea to call the park ahead of time to see if firewood or other supplies are available, Lawson said.

Go to www.iowadnr.com, click on state parks, then on camping. Select off season camping fees. After water is turned off, all campsites are considered non-modern.

Campground Reservation System

Work continues on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' campground reservation system, set to debut in 2006. The system will be phased in beginning with state park cabins in January, followed by campsites in late February, and then lodges. A mixture of electric and non-electric campsites, selected by staff from each park, will accept reservations. Only 50 percent of the campsites will be reservable, the rest will remain first come, first served.

Reservations will be accepted 24 hours a day either over the Internet, or through a phone ordering system, with the details still to be worked out. Credit cards will be accepted. There is a single fee for each transaction, regardless of the number of camping nights. Internet users will have \$4 added to their order and phone center users will have \$6 added to their order.

A website will have an interactive map showing which campsites are reservable. There will be information on each campsite including how large the site is, the size of the camping pad and photos. Reservations can be made for up to 3 months in advance or from as little as two days ahead.

"We continue to get inquiries and requests from Iowans about this reservation system who are excited that they can again camp in their home state," said Sherry Arntzen, with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources state parks bureau who is leading the reservation effort.

For more information, contact Kevin Szcudronski 515-281-8674.

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DRIVERS URGED TO USE CAUTION – DEER ARE ON THE MOVE

DES MOINES – The combination of the fall harvest the approaching deer breeding season, known as the rut, is causing the normally cautious animals to ignore their natural instincts and be on the move during all times of the day.

As the soybean harvest wraps up and the corn harvest hits full stride, deer will be moving from field to field in search of food and cover. Then in a few weeks, the breeding season will be here.

During the “rut,” drivers should use extra caution and be on the lookout for deer crossing the roads. “Slow down, especially around deer habitat; timber and creeks or rivers, for example, and drive within the range of your headlights,” said Alan Foster, spokesman for the Iowa DNR. “Deer tend to travel in groups, so if there is one, there could be more.”

If you encounter a deer on the road, brake firmly, steer to maintain control and stop as soon as possible.

“Be extra cautious around dawn and dusk and try to avoid traveling during those times if at all possible,” Foster said.

In 2004, there was an estimated 15,000 deer vehicle collisions in Iowa.

For more information, contact Foster at 515-281-8874.

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AVOID FALL PLOWING – LEAVE FOOD AND COVER FOR WILDLIFE

BOONE - Fall tillage practices, even reduced tillage techniques such as disking and chisel plowing, can eliminate important winter food and cover for many wildlife species in Iowa. According to Todd Bogenschutz, wildlife research biologist with the Department of Natural Resources, waste grains and crop residue remaining in untilled crop fields following harvest provide important food and cover for species such as pheasants, quail, partridge, turkey, and deer.

Studies of harvested untilled crop fields show wildlife consume 55 to 85 percent of the waste corn and soybeans between fall harvest and the following spring. The corn stubble and stalks remaining in untilled cornfields also provide concealment cover for pheasants, quail, and partridge, so the birds are not so exposed to predators when feeding in the winter, Bogenschutz said.

Research shows even reduced tillage methods, such as disking and chisel plowing, reduce waste grains available to wildlife by 80 percent and reduce crop stubble by 50 percent or more. A 1985 study showed untilled Illinois corn fields averaged of 200 pounds waste corn per acre verses 40 pounds per acre in corn fields that were disked or chisel plowed. Moldboard plowed fields averaged 4 pounds per acre.

“Farmers and landowners can leave a free food plot for wildlife by simply not fall plowing their fields,” Bogenschutz said.

For more information, contact Bogenschutz at 515-432-2823.

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NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION TO MEET NEAR CRESCO

CRESCO - The Natural Resource Commission (NRC) of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will meet at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, Oct. 13, at the Prairie's Edge Nature Center, 11562 Valley Ave., near Cresco. The meeting is open to the public.

Members of the NRC are Joan Schneider, Randy Duncan, Carol Kramer, Richard Francisco, Janice Marcantonio, Lennis Moore and Liz Garst. The DNR Director is Jeffrey Vonk.

The following is the agenda for the October meeting.

- Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes of Sept. 8 and 28 Meetings
- Director's Remarks
- Construction Projects
- Land Acquisition
 - Garlock Slough Wetlands Complex, Dickinson County – Dickinson County Pheasants Forever
 - Algific Talus Slope Area, Winneshiek County – Patricia Johnson
 - Algific Talus Slope Area, Winneshiek County – Scott & Laurie Johnson
 - Yellow River State Forest, Allamakee County – Kelly
 - Algific Talus Slope Area, Clayton County – Helgersen
 - Shawtee Lake, Fremont County – Sorenson and Kailey
 - Stone State Park, Woodbury County – Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
 - Waterman Creek Prairie, O'Brien County – The Nature Conservancy
 - Little Sioux Wildlife Management Area, Clay County – Gerjets
 - Indiangrass Hills, Iowa County – Rhodes, Felder, Brown, Buss
- Rulemaking for Chapter 18, Rental Fee Schedule for State-owned Property, Riverbed, Lakebed and Waterfront Lands
- Rulemaking for Chapter 16, Public, Commercial, Private Docks and Dock Management Areas
- REAP City Parks and Open Spaces Grants
- REAP County Conservation Board Grants
- REAP Public/Private Cost-share Grants Program
- 28E Agreement with the City of Fort Madison
- Final Rule – Chapter 61, State Parks and Recreation Areas and Chapter 62, State Forest Camping
- Conservation and Recreation Donations
- Dark Sky Initiative
- Anglers Bay, Spirit Lake Shore Protection
- General Discussion

- Items for Next Meeting, Nov. 10, in Des Moines

For more information, contact Karyn Stone at 515-281-8650.

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